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## THOMAS DEFENDS C.I.A.-AIDED WORK

But Ex-Socialist Head Denies  
He Knew Source of Funds

By STEVEN V. ROBERTS  
Norman Thomas, the former Socialist Party leader, defended Mr. Kaplan for help country," Mr. Thomas said, yesterday, a program under him, the first grant of CIA-straining which Latin-American political clams of the democratic left thereafter, he said, the CIA, was overthrown by a military coup.

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Funds were scarce in the early to hide out for several days before he escaped from the

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institute through the Kaplan Fund.

Mr. Thomas was chairman of

the Institute of International

Labor Research, which ran

schools in Costa Rica and the

Dominican Republic and a pub-

lishing house in Mexico between

1957 and 1963.

J. M. Kaplan, former presi-

dent of the Welch Grape Juice

Company, disclosed last week

that the foundation bearing his

name had channeled about

\$1-million in CIA funds to the

institute. Neither Mr. Thomas

nor anyone else connected with

the institute knew the source

of the funds, Mr. Kaplan said.

The J. M. Kaplan Fund was

identified as a conduit for CIA

funds during a Congressional in-

vestigation in 1964.

What We Did Was Good Work

"I'm not ashamed of what we

did," Mr. Thomas, now 82 years

old, said in a telephone inter-

view. "What we did was good

work, and no one ever tried to

tell us what to do. I am ashamed

we swallowed this CIA busi-

ness, though. If I had a choice I

would never have accepted CIA

support. That would have let

them crush the project at any

minute or made us persona non

grata in the countries we were

working with."

Mr. Thomas said he had

"heard rumors" that the money

came from the CIA, but

"they were always denied when

I asked Mr. Kaplan about them."

"I ought to have been more

curious," he said. "I'm not try-

ing to save myself from justi-

fied criticism. I ought to have

known, but I didn't."

Mr. Thomas said the institute

was the "brainchild" of Sacha

Volman, a naturalized citizen

from Rumania who had once

worked for Radio Free Europe

and had spent more than seven

years in Nazi and Russian con-

centration camps.

"Volman came to the conclu-

sion that nothing was being

done successfully in Latin Amer-

ica to find an alternative to the

Communists or the military ol-

igarchies," Mr. Thomas said.

Organized 17 Parties

Mr. Volman then organized

17 left-of-center political

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